

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 STATE 305153
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FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY BONN IMMEDIATE
INFO WHITE HOUSE IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T STATE 305153

NODIS
FROM THE SECRETARY FOR THE AMBASSADOR

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR US GW XF

SUBJECT: BRIEFING ON BEGIN VISIT

1. PLEASE SEE STATE SECRETARY VAN WELL AND GIVE HIM THE FOLLOWING RUNDOWN ON PRIME MINISTER BEGIN'S TALKS IN WASHINGTON. ASK HIM TO PASS ON THE ACCOUNT, ON MY BEHALF, TO FOREIGN MINISTER GENSCHER.

2. BEGIN CAME TO WASHINGTON AT HIS OWN REQUEST AND MET WITH THE PRESIDENT ON DECEMBER 16 AND 17. WITH HIM HE BROUGHT A PROPOSAL FOR SELF-RULE FOR THE WEST BANK AND GAZA AND IDEAS ON SINAI, BOTH OF WHICH HE WANTED TO DISCUSS WITH THE PRESIDENT.

3. THE PROPOSAL FOR THE WEST BANK AND GAZA INCLUDES
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ELECTIONS IN THOSE AREAS AND THE FORMATION OF AN ELECTED COUNCIL TO ADMINISTER WEST BANK/GAZA DOMESTIC AFFAIRS. THE PROPOSAL IS A MAJOR STEP FORWARD IN BEGIN'S THINKING BUT IN ITS CURRENT FORM WOULD PROBABLY NOT BE SATISFACTORY TO SADAT; ONE MAJOR PROBLEM IS THAT IT PROVIDES FOR CONTINUED ISRAELI MILITARY PRESENCE IN THE WEST BANK AND GAZA. HOWEVER, THE DISCUSSIONS MADE CLEAR THAT BEGIN'S

THINKING IS STILL IN THE PROCESS OF FERMENTATION AND CHANGE. HE PARTICIPATED IN THE DISCUSSION WITH AN OPEN MIND AND SEEMED PREPARED TO CHANGE HIS POSITION IN RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS. BEGIN SAID HE WANTED TO HAVE PRESIDENT SADAT'S IDEAS BEFORE MAKING A FINAL PROPOSAL.

4. OUR PUBLIC AND PRIVATE STANCE DURING THE VISIT WAS THAT WE ARE WELL PLEASED THAT A DIRECT DIALOGUE HAS NOW BEEN OPENED BETWEEN EGYPT AND ISRAEL AND THAT THE ULTIMATE TEST OF THE ACCEPTABILITY OF ANY PROPOSALS LIES WITH THE PARTIES WHO MUST EVENTUALLY SIGN THE PEACE TREATIES. WE ENCOURAGED BEGIN TO PURSUE HIS DISCUSSIONS WITH SADAT BUT CAREFULLY AVOIDED ENDORSING HIS PROPOSALS.

5. ON SINAI, BEGIN DESCRIBED IDEAS WHICH HE HOPES WILL MEET EGYPT'S CONCERN FOR TOTAL ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL TO THE PRE-1967 INTERNATIONAL EGYPTIAN-ISRAELI BORDER IN STAGES, WITH ADEQUATE MEASURES FOR ASSURING SECURITY. ALTHOUGH WE MADE CLEAR THAT PRESIDENTSADATWILL HAVE TO BE THE JUDGE OF WHATEVER PROPOSALS BEGIN MAY DECIDE TO MAKE, ON SINAI WE EXPECT BEGIN AND SADAT WILL FIND THEMSELVES WITHIN NEGOTIATING RANGE.

6. IN SUM, MANY PROBLEMS REMAIN BUT A PROCESS HAS BEEN INITIATED AND THE PROSPECTS FOR PEACE IN THE MIDDLE EAST HAVE IMPROVED MARKEDLY. A WALL OF DISTRUST HAS BEEN
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BREACHED AND THE PARTIES ARE NOW SEEKING TO BUILD BRIDGES RATHER THAN TO FIND WAYS TO SAY NO.

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